

## SMOKY VALLEY HOME EDUCATORS

# Sports Operations Manual

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Operational standards governing participation in all SVHE Eagles sports

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Updated by Athletic Board majority vote • Basketball • Volleyball • Cross Country • Baseball • Football

“And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.” — Luke 2:52

## Mission

SVHE Eagles pursue excellence — in character, in competition, and in every sport, every season. We expect every coach and athlete to bring their very best. Anything less falls short of what God calls us to — not because winning demands it, but because He does.

We also hold that building character and competing to win are not in tension — done right, one produces the other. The athlete who learns to receive correction develops faster. The team that puts the group ahead of individual glory plays better together. Character is not what we fall back on when we lose. It is what God calls us to regardless of the scoreboard — and those watching will remember how we competed long after the score is forgotten.

The foundation for this is found in Luke 2:52, where Jesus himself modeled growth in wisdom, stature, and in favor with God and man — four dimensions of whole-person excellence that SVHE takes seriously across every sport, every season. The full treatment of this passage is in the Athlete and Family Handbook. All Sport ADs and coaches are encouraged to read that section before their first practice of each season.

Every policy in this manual exists to protect and advance that mission. These are not bureaucratic requirements — they are the structure that makes the mission possible.

## Preamble

This Sports Operations Manual governs the operational standards of the SVHE Eagles Sports Program. It sits beneath the Sports Governance Policy and above the Athlete and Family Handbook. Policies here apply equally to every SVHE sport unless a specific exception is noted.

The Athletic Board reviews and approves this manual. Sport ADs are responsible for implementing it within their sports. Head coaches are responsible for communicating relevant policies to players and families at the start of each season.

Amendment: This manual may be updated by Athletic Board majority vote at any time. No Advisory Council action is required. Changes take effect at the start of the next season unless the Athletic Board designates an earlier effective date. This manual does not modify SVHE's organizational bylaws.

## Policy 1 — Eligibility

### 1.1 Homeschool Requirement

- Students must be actively homeschooling, or attending a private school that does not offer a competing sporting program in that sport
- SVHE is a homeschool-first organization; participation of private school students does not alter this identity
- For SVHE eligibility, a student is considered actively homeschooling when a parent or guardian is responsible for directing at least 51% of the student's academic coursework; students enrolled in a traditional public or private school, or an online school where the curriculum and instruction are provided by the institution rather than the parent, do not qualify as homeschooling
- A student who is enrolled full-time at any publicly funded institution — including online schools, junior colleges, or vocational/technical schools — is not considered homeschooling for SVHE eligibility purposes, regardless of any supplemental parent-directed coursework

- Dual credit, vocational, or outside classes are permitted as part-time supplements but do not count toward the 51% homeschool threshold

## 1.2 Academic Standard

- Minimum grade point average of 2.0 (C average) must be maintained throughout the season
- Coaches may request academic confirmation from a parent if there is a concern about eligibility

## 1.3 Age Limits

- High school: players may not turn 19 before September 1st of the participating year
- Junior high: players may not turn 15 before September 1st of the participating year
- Once a student has participated in any high school graduation ceremony, they are no longer eligible as a player in SVHE sports

## 1.4 KSHSAA Approval Status

SVHE holds annual KSHSAA approval as a non-member organization. This approval covers all SVHE sports and activities as a group — it is not obtained separately for each sport. SVHE is not a KSHSAA member school and does not participate in KSHSAA postseason play, regional tournaments, or state championships.

### Annual Renewal Process

- KSHSAA sends renewal paperwork to the Board Chairperson each year, typically around May. (The Board Chairperson is a Sport AD elected annually by the Athletic Board — see Sports Governance Policy, Section 4.)
- The renewal covers all SVHE sports and activities under one application; a fee is required
- The application must be completed accurately — KSHSAA will return incomplete or incorrect applications for correction before approval is granted
- Upon approval, KSHSAA provides a handbook to the AD specifying the rules that apply to approved non-member organizations; Sport ADs should review the current handbook before any season where KSHSAA competition is scheduled
- Going forward, the Board Chairperson is responsible for managing the annual KSHSAA renewal; the current renewal contact is being transitioned to the new governance structure

### Eligibility Rules for KSHSAA Competition

When SVHE teams compete against KSHSAA member schools, the following eligibility rules apply:

- Junior high and middle school students must be at least 11 years of age before September 1 of the participating year
- A student has 3 cumulative and consecutive years to compete against KSHSAA member middle/junior high schools, immediately followed by high school eligibility
- A student has 4 cumulative and consecutive years to compete against KSHSAA member high schools

The head coach for each sport is responsible for communicating these requirements to families at the start of any season where KSHSAA member schools appear on the schedule. The Sport AD tracks cumulative year eligibility for any player who may be approaching their limit.

Additional rules applicable to SVHE as an approved organization are detailed in the KSHSAA handbook provided upon annual approval. Sport ADs are responsible for reviewing and applying those rules within their sport.

## 1.5 Parental Placement Option

- Parents may request junior high level placement rather than high school
- Request must be submitted before the first game; player remains at that level all season
- Players 15 or older by September 1st may not compete in junior high tournament events
- Opposing coaches must be informed when a player is placed down a level
- In cases where roster size would otherwise prevent a team from fielding enough players, a junior high player may participate at the high school level in the same season with Sport AD approval, provided they continue to meet junior high eligibility requirements for junior high competition
- A junior high player playing up on a high school team may do so without restriction when competing against other homeschool programs, non-KSHSAA tournaments, and NDIICHA tournament play
- Where the high school schedule includes games against KSHSAA member schools, the head coach must confirm at the start of the season that the parent of any junior high player being considered for play-up has reviewed and accepted the KSHSAA cumulative year eligibility implications described in Policy 1.4. This confirmation must be documented before the player participates in any game against a KSHSAA member school
- When a junior high player participates at the high school level in NDIICHA tournament play, games count against the high school team's 25-game limit, not the junior high team's limit, so long as junior high players compose less than half of the playing time for that game

## 1.6 Private School Participant Policy

Private school students are welcome to participate in SVHE sports where their school does not offer a team in that sport. All conduct and commitment requirements in the Athlete and Family Handbook apply equally to private school participants.

### Regular Season Eligibility

- A private school student whose school does not field a team in the relevant sport is eligible for all SVHE regular season games and SVHE-run competitions
- A student who is actively rostered on their private school's team in that sport is not eligible to also participate for SVHE
- All standard SVHE eligibility requirements apply: minimum 2.0 GPA, age limits, and conduct standards

### NDIICHA Basketball Tournament Eligibility

The NDIICHA tournament has specific rules governing private school participants. The Basketball AD must verify tournament eligibility for all private school players before submitting the tournament roster:

- Private school students may participate in the NDIICHA tournament only if their school does not field a basketball team
- A student actively on their private school's basketball team is ineligible for the NDIICHA tournament entirely
- Private school students may not make up more than 40% of any NDIICHA tournament roster; the Basketball AD monitors this cap as the roster is built each season
- Players claiming homeschool status for NDIICHA purposes must meet the 51% definition in Policy 1.1; the parent attests to this at registration
- Families of private school participants should confirm tournament eligibility with the Basketball AD before the season begins — not mid-season

### **Coaching and Leadership**

- Private school parents may serve as assistant coaches
- Eligibility of private school parents to serve as head coaches or Sport ADs is subject to Athletic Board approval under the same criteria as all other candidates

A formal Private School Partnership Policy is under development and will be adopted by the Athletic Board before the start of the 2027–2028 program year. Until that policy is in place, private school participation is governed by the eligibility provisions above and by individual Athletic Board review as needed.

## **Policy 2 — Registration and Membership**

- All registration fees — including SVHE membership, non-member participation fees, and sport-specific player fees — are published in the current registration forms at [svhe.com](http://svhe.com) and updated annually by the Athletic Board before each registration period opens
- Fee schedules are not published in this manual; always refer families to the current registration forms for accurate fee information
- All participants must complete official SVHE registration before their first practice
- Late registration fees may apply; current deadlines posted at [svhe.com](http://svhe.com)
- The Master Athlete and Family Handbook must be signed by the player, parent/guardian, and head coach and returned before the player's first practice

## **Policy 3 — Attendance**

- Players are expected to attend all scheduled practices and games
- Absences must be communicated to the coach as early as possible and in advance
- Repeated unexcused practice absences may result in reduced playing time or roster removal at the head coach's discretion
- Unexcused game absences are a serious commitment failure addressed by the head coach
- Families whose schedules cannot support consistent attendance are encouraged to sit out the season; a player's absence affects every other player on the team
- Players must travel to away games with a responsible adult; players may not travel alone or with other players only

## Policy 4 — Playing Time

SVHE competes to win and develops the whole athlete. Playing time reflects both:

- Developmental level (junior high, recreational): All players participate as appropriate for skill level; effort and growth are primary measures
- Competitive level (varsity): Playing time is earned through effort, coachability, and performance; equal playing time is not guaranteed
- Playing time decisions belong to the head coach within this framework
- Concerns about playing time are raised through the conflict resolution process in Policy 5 — not on the sideline during or after games

## Policy 5 — Conflict Resolution

Every concern must be addressed at the lowest appropriate level before escalating. No issue should skip a tier. Scripture guides our approach: Matthew 18:15, Philippians 2:3–4, Proverbs 16:32, James 4:1–3.

Tier	Role	Handles	Escalates To
<b>1 — Peer</b>	Team Captain	Minor friction between players at practice	Assistant Coach
<b>2 — Floor</b>	Assistant Coach	In-practice conduct, individual concerns, first parent contact	Head Coach
<b>3 — Team</b>	Head Coach	Team discipline, playing time, repeated conduct, parent conflicts within team	Sport AD
<b>4 — Sport</b>	Sport AD	Cross-team issues, coach conflicts within sport, serious discipline	Athletic Board
<b>5 — Governance</b>	Athletic Board	Cross-sport disputes, appeals, policy decisions, program vision	Advisory Council

Note: In sports where the Sport AD and head coach are the same person, tiers 3 and 4 are carried by the same individual. The escalation path remains the same — that person then escalates to the Athletic Board.

Additional principles:

- Parents and players must allow at least 24 hours to pass after a game or practice before contacting a coach to discuss a frustration or concern. This time is encouraged to be used for prayer and reflection — to assess whether the concern is genuinely worth raising and to approach the conversation with a clear head

- Concerns are never raised on the sideline during a game, in the lobby or common area immediately following a game, or in any public setting where the coach has not had time to decompress
- All conflicts must be addressed through a direct conversation — in person or by phone. Text messages and emails are not appropriate channels for raising a conflict or frustration with a coach, player, or parent
- If you are not willing to speak directly with the person involved, consider whether the concern is significant enough to pursue
- Sports conflicts are not brought to SVHE organizational officers; the sports program's own structure handles them
- Concerns are not raised publicly or on social media before this process has been followed
- Formal appeals of Sport AD decisions submitted in writing to the Athletic Board within seven (7) days; Board decision within fourteen (14) days; affected Sport AD recuses
- Athletic Board decisions on appeals are final except in matters involving SVHE's Statement of Faith, which may be referred to the Advisory Council
- Safety and Child Protection Policy concerns always bypass this process and are reported immediately to the Sport AD and the SVHE Advisory Council
- When someone brings you a concern on behalf of another person, your role is not to investigate or act on it — it is to direct that person back to the one who is actually offended. If the offended party is not willing to bring the concern themselves, it is likely not significant enough to pursue
- Leaders at every level — coaches, Sport ADs, and Athletic Board members — should resist the temptation to chase down third-party complaints. A leader who goes looking for problems, or who fans the flame of a grievance brought by a messenger, can manufacture conflict where none would otherwise take root

SVHE calls every member of this community to be a peacemaker. Scripture is clear on this standard:

- Matthew 5:9 — “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God”
- Romans 12:18 — “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone”
- James 3:17-18 — “Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness”
- Psalms 34:14 — “Seek peace and pursue it”
- 2 Corinthians 13:11 — “Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace”
- People will have issues with one another — we are all sinful and we all fall short. The answer is not to avoid conflict but to handle it directly, humbly, and quickly. When that happens, 99% of problems are resolved without ever reaching a leader

## **Policy 6 — Safety and Child Protection**

### **6.1 Background Check Process**

All coaching candidates must complete a background check before their first practice of each season. The process is administered as follows:

- The Sport AD confirms a Coach Application Form has been submitted for each candidate before initiating a background check request

- Background checks are conducted through the vendor authorized by the SVHE Advisory Council; the Board Chairperson maintains the current vendor contact and process
- Results are reviewed by the Sport AD and, for head coach candidates, the Athletic Board before the appointment is confirmed
- A candidate with a disqualifying result may not serve in any coaching role; the Sport AD notifies the candidate and documents the decision
- Returning coaches: background checks are renewed at least every two (2) years; the Sport AD tracks renewal dates and initiates renewal before the applicable season
- Background check documentation is maintained confidentially by the Board Chairperson; it is not shared beyond those with a need to know

## 6.2 SVHE Child Protection Policy

All sports program activities are governed by SVHE's Child Protection Policy (svhe.com):

- SVHE strives to have two adult workers present at all activities involving minors. If only one adult is available, all activity must be held in a fully open and observable setting with no private or enclosed spaces
- No one-on-one interaction between an adult and a minor in a private or unobservable setting; a coach may work with multiple athletes in a more private setting provided no single minor is ever alone with the adult
- All coaches must complete a written application and background check before their first practice; renewed at least every two years
- Coaches should avoid private digital communications with players and use group chats or communication channels approved by the program
- Suspected sexual abuse or misconduct reported immediately to the SVHE Advisory Council and to the Kansas Protection Report Center (1-800-922-5330 or dcf.ks.gov)
- Coaches may not transport players who are not their own children without at least one other athlete, parent, or coach present. A coach driving alone with a player who is not their child — regardless of distance or circumstance — is not permitted under any conditions

## 6.3 Concussion and Physical Safety

- Concussion protocols follow CDC HeadsUp guidelines and KSHSAA recommendations; current resources at svhe.com
- Any player showing signs of a concussion is removed immediately and may not return without appropriate clearance
- All coaches must review SVHE safety protocols before their first practice each season
- Any injury or safety incident during a team event must be reported to the Sport AD

# Policy 7 — Finances and Budget

## 7.1 Budget Process

- Each Sport Treasurer prepares a budget proposal and submits it through the Sport AD to the Athletic Board for approval before each season
- Sport ADs manage spending within Athletic Board-approved limits

- Sport-specific player fees set by the Athletic Board; fee changes require Board approval before registration opens

## 7.2 Sport Treasurer Reporting Schedule

- End-of-season report submitted to SVHE Treasurer (Advisory Council) within thirty (30) days of season conclusion, copy to Sport AD
- Annual budget proposal submitted to SVHE Treasurer by April for Advisory Council presentation
- Basketball: mid-season check-in with SVHE Treasurer recommended given program size
- Significant financial irregularities reported immediately to SVHE Treasurer and Sport AD

## 7.3 Accounting System

- All Sport Treasurers required to record all transactions in SVHE-approved web-based accounting system
- SVHE Treasurer has administrative access; Sport ADs have read access to their sport's account
- Reports generated from the accounting system fulfill seasonal reporting requirements

## 7.4 Spending Authority

Spending within Athletic Board-approved budget line items does not require additional approval beyond what is already delegated to the Sport Treasurer and Sport AD. The spending authority tiers below apply to unbudgeted expenses and to any expenditure that exceeds an approved budget line item.

- Unbudgeted under \$100: Sport Treasurer acts independently
- Unbudgeted \$100–\$500: Sport AD approval required
- Unbudgeted \$501–\$750: Board Chairperson approval required
- Unbudgeted over \$750: full Athletic Board approval required
- The Chairperson's delegated limit of \$750 will be reviewed at the annual May/June planning meeting; the Athletic Board may vote to adjust it based on program experience
- Fundraising requires prior written approval from the Sport AD and Board Chairperson

# Policy 8 — Coach Selection and Accountability

## 8.1 Selection Process

In sports where the Sport AD also serves as head coach, see Sports Governance Policy Section 2 for guidance on when separating the roles is encouraged.

- Head coach candidates are formally recommended by the Sport AD and approved by the Athletic Board
- Assistant coach candidates are recommended by the head coach and approved by the Sport AD
- All coaching candidates must agree to the SVHE Statement of Faith and sign the Master Athlete and Family Handbook before their first practice

- All candidates must complete a written application and background check per SVHE's Child Protection Policy before serving; Coach Application Forms must be submitted no later than three (3) weeks before the first practice of the season
- All coaches must be current or former SVHE members, or have an approved SVHE sponsor
- One-season renewable terms; reappointment follows the same approval process

## 8.2 Required Qualities

All coaches must demonstrate the Jethro standard from Exodus 18:21 as described in the Sports Governance Policy, Section 3: Able, Fears God, Trustworthy, and Free from Self-Interest.

Head coaches are additionally expected to consistently lead devotions and pray with their team throughout the season. Spiritual development is not an add-on to SVHE sports — it is central to the mission. A candidate who is unwilling to fulfill this responsibility is not a fit for a head coaching role at SVHE regardless of their coaching ability.

## 8.3 Accountability

- Head coaches are accountable to their Sport AD
- Sport AD may remove an assistant coach without full Athletic Board approval
- Removal of a head coach requires Athletic Board approval
- Serious conduct or Child Protection Policy violations escalated immediately to the Sport AD and Athletic Board
- A coach whose conduct is inconsistent with the Master Athlete and Family Handbook may be removed regardless of coaching ability

## 8.4 Established Adult Coach — Definition

The term 'established adult coach' is used throughout these policies to describe a higher standard of coaching eligibility required in specific circumstances. A person who meets this definition may serve as a head coach of any team, including opposite-sex coaching situations described in Section 8.7.

This definition applies equally to men and women. An established adult coach is a person who meets all of the following criteria:

1. Is at least 25 years of age.
2. Is married, or is widowed having been previously married.
3. Has children of their own. In the absence of children, has demonstrated through length of marriage and life circumstances a comparable level of maturity and household responsibility, as confirmed by the Advisory Council.
4. Has been an active, known participant in the SVHE community for at least one full program year, or is otherwise known to the Advisory Council and the affected Sport AD through comparable community involvement.
5. Is an active member of a local church, and a pastor or elder is able to provide a character reference.

6. Has completed the SVHE Coach Application and background check and been approved.

In exceptional circumstances where an individual does not meet one or more of the criteria above through no fault of their own, the Advisory Council may confirm eligibility based on a review of the individual's full life circumstances, character, and community standing. This exception is not a general waiver — it exists to ensure that the spirit of this definition, which centers on life experience, character, and accountability to the community, is applied with wisdom and compassion in situations where a rigid reading of the criteria would produce an unjust result.

**Policy intent:** This definition exists to ensure that those in head coaching roles have lived through the full weight of adult responsibility and are known and accountable to the community they serve. Age alone is not the measure — life experience, character, and community standing are.

## 8.5 Recent Graduate Coaching Policy

SVHE values and actively encourages program alumni who wish to return and invest in the next generation of athletes. Recent graduates who want to come back and give to the program are exactly the kind of people SVHE seeks to cultivate — they know the culture, have lived the mission, and carry credibility with current players that an outside adult never has.

At the same time, placing a young coach in a role before they are ready — before the peer dynamic has fully shifted, before they have the maturity to carry authority — sets them up to fail and creates risk for the players they serve. The following guidelines exist to protect both recent graduates and the athletes they will coach, and should be read in that spirit.

These guidelines apply to any person seeking a coaching role within one (1) full season of their graduation from SVHE sports participation. They govern same-sex coaching situations. Opposite-sex coaching is addressed separately in Section 8.7.

### 8.5.1 Eligibility Requirements

A recent graduate seeking a coaching role must meet all of the following:

- Nomination required. The candidate must be nominated by a current SVHE head coach. Recent graduates may not self-apply for coaching positions.
- Assistant role only. A recent graduate may serve as an assistant coach only during their first coaching season. They are not eligible to serve as a head coach or Sport AD until they have completed at least one full season as an assistant coach under an experienced head coach.
- Age gap. The coach must be at least five (5) years older than the maximum eligible age for the team level they are coaching, as determined by the September 1st age cutoff for that competition year. Where a recent graduate does not meet this threshold for a particular team level, they may not serve in any direct coaching capacity for that team regardless of other qualifications.

- Conflict history review. Before appointment, the head coach and Sport AD review whether unresolved relational conflict exists between the candidate and any current player. If significant unresolved conflict exists, the appointment is deferred until those situations are genuinely resolved.
- Joint approval. The head coach and Sport AD must both approve the appointment before it is offered.

### 8.5.2 Child Protection Policy Compliance

All Child Protection Policy requirements apply fully to recent graduates in coaching roles, including background checks, two-deep supervision, and communication restrictions. No private communication between a coach and a player is permitted; all communication goes through a parent or approved team channels.

## 8.6 Practice Assistant Role

The Practice Assistant role exists to give SVHE alumni a meaningful way to remain connected to the program after graduation, to provide head coaches with capable help at practice in physically demanding areas, and to develop future coaches over time. A Practice Assistant is not a coach. The role is explicitly limited to practice support and carries no coaching authority. This section governs same-sex Practice Assistant situations. **Practice Assistants serving as assistant coaches are not addressed by this section** — those situations are covered by Section 8.5 (Recent Graduate Coaching Policy) and carry different requirements including the five-year age gap. A recent graduate who does not meet the requirements of Section 8.5 may still serve as a Practice Assistant under this section, since the Practice Assistant role carries no coaching authority.

### 8.6.1 Eligibility Requirements

A Practice Assistant must meet all of the following:

**SVHE alumni.** The candidate must have been a player in SVHE sports.

**Graduated.** The candidate must have graduated from high school.

**Same-sex requirement.** A Practice Assistant may only serve with athletes of the same sex. For team sports composed entirely of one sex, this means matching the team's sex. For co-ed sports where boys and girls practice alongside one another (Cross Country), the Practice Assistant works only with athletes of their own sex within the practice.

**Coach nomination required.** The candidate must be nominated by a current SVHE head coach. Practice Assistants may not self-apply.

**Athletic Board approval.** Final approval rests with the Athletic Board, not with the head coach or Sport AD alone.

**One-season term.** Appointment is for one season only. Practice Assistants must reapply each year they wish to serve. There is no maximum number of seasons a Practice Assistant may serve, provided they reapply and are approved each year.

**Volunteer role.** The Practice Assistant role is a volunteer position. No compensation or stipend is provided.

### 8.6.2 Application and Screening

**Practice Assistant Application Form.** A simplified version of the Coach Application Form is completed for each season.

**Background check.** Current within two (2) years, consistent with all other SVHE coaching roles.

**References.** Two references required, at least one of whom is the candidate's pastor or church elder.

### 8.6.3 What Practice Assistants Do at Practice

Practice Assistants help with the practice work that develops players physically. The following examples illustrate the kinds of activities appropriate to the role, but are not exhaustive — head coaches direct Practice Assistants in whatever practice support best serves their team:

Running and assisting in skill stations; demonstrating technique and form; leading and supporting conditioning drills

**Baseball:** throwing batting practice, hitting practice grounders and fly balls, fielding drills

**Volleyball:** setting up and running serving, passing, hitting, or defensive drills

**Basketball:** shooting drills, defensive stations, and conditioning sets

**Cross Country:** pacing runners during interval workouts and supporting form drills

**Football:** holding pads, running route trees, and assisting with line drills

Setting up and breaking down practice equipment

### 8.6.4 What Practice Assistants Do at Games

A Practice Assistant may attend games as a supporter of the team. With the head coach's approval, a Practice Assistant may be present in the dugout, on the bench, or on the sideline to help with practical support — water, equipment, gear, stat keeping, communicating coach instructions to players, and similar non-coaching tasks. A Practice Assistant may also help with pre-game warmups and other practice-extension activities.

During the game itself, a Practice Assistant offers **encouragement and support only — not coaching**. Encouragement ("nice swing," "good hustle," "way to go") is welcome. Technical coaching, instruction on technique, in-game adjustments, signaling, calling plays, or directing players is reserved for the head coach and assistant coaches. The coaches are the only voices players receive coaching from during games.

The Practice Assistant does not make in-game decisions, decide playing time or position, or speak on behalf of the coach regarding game strategy.

### 8.6.5 What Practice Assistants Do Not Do

A Practice Assistant does not carry coaching authority. The following are outside the role at all times:

Discipline decisions regarding players

Decisions about playing time, lineup, or position

Communication with parents on behalf of the coach regarding player issues

Leading practice in the absence of a head or assistant coach

### 8.6.6 Two-Deep Supervision

A Practice Assistant counts toward two-deep supervision **only when a head coach or assistant coach is also present**. Two or more Practice Assistants together do not satisfy the two-deep requirement — a coach must always be present. A Practice Assistant may never lead practice alone.

### **8.6.7 Mentor Pipeline**

The Practice Assistant role is intentionally designed as a development pathway. Alumni who serve as Practice Assistants gain experience, demonstrate character, and develop coaching instincts under the supervision of experienced coaches. Many will go on to qualify as assistant coaches once they meet the requirements of Section 8.5 (Recent Graduate Coaching Policy) or the Established Adult standard in Section 8.4. This pathway protects the program, protects the alumni, and develops the next generation of coaches from within.

## **8.7 Opposite-Sex Coaching Policy**

The following requirements apply whenever a coach serves in any capacity — head coach or assistant — with a team composed primarily of players of the opposite sex. These requirements reflect SVHE’s commitment to protecting athletes, protecting coaches, and maintaining the trust of the families the program serves.

### **8.7.1 Established Adult Standard Required**

Any person coaching the opposite sex must meet the Established Adult Coach definition in Section 8.4. This requirement applies to both head coaches and assistant coaches, and to both men coaching girls’ teams and women coaching boys’ teams.

Recent graduates are not eligible to coach in any capacity on an opposite-sex team, regardless of whether other requirements in Section 8.5 are met.

### **8.7.2 Supervision Requirements for Head Coaches of Opposite-Sex Teams**

A head coach leading a team composed primarily of players of the opposite sex should have a qualified assistant coach of the same sex as the players present at all practices, games, and team events. This requirement applies to both male head coaches of girls’ teams and female head coaches of boys’ teams.

- The required assistant coach must themselves meet the Established Adult Coach definition in Section 8.4.
- SVHE strives to have the required assistant coach present at all activities. If the assistant coach is unavailable for a given practice or event, all activity must be held in a fully open and observable setting with no private or enclosed spaces, consistent with Policy 6.2.
- A head coach may never be alone with a single minor in any private or unobservable setting under any circumstances.

### **8.7.3 Two-Deep Supervision — All Teams**

Regardless of coach gender or team gender composition, SVHE strives to have two adults present at all practices, games, and team events. No coach should be alone with players in a private or unobservable setting.

- Where two adults are not available, all activity must be held in a fully open and observable setting with no private or enclosed spaces, and multiple athletes must be present
- A coach may never be alone with a single minor under any circumstances, regardless of the setting

- Sport ADs are encouraged to identify and maintain a list of background-checked parents or adults who are willing to serve as a second adult when needed. Having a pool of approved backup adults available reduces the likelihood of practices being cancelled or held under less than ideal supervision conditions

## 8.8 Family Relationship Policy in Coaching

No coach may serve in a role that places them in direct authority over a spouse or immediate family member. Full details are in the Sports Governance Policy, Section 8. In the coaching context:

- A head coach and their spouse may not both serve within the same sport where one would supervise the other
- A coach's immediate family member may not serve as Sport Treasurer for the same sport
- Automatic recusal applies to any decision concerning a family member

**Sections 8.4–8.7 note:** These three sections work together as a unified framework. The Established Adult Coach definition sets the standard for head coaches. The Recent Graduate Policy creates a supervised pathway for alumni who want to give back. The Opposite-Sex Coaching Policy adds structural protections where the risk profile is higher. No single section should be read in isolation.

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“But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”  
— Isaiah 40:31

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